

QUESTIONS

Proposed and Answered,

RELATIVE TO THE

STABILITY, CHANGE, AND
SANCTIFICATION

OF THE

SABBATH.

*and the Commandment holy,
and good, Rom. vii. 12.*

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QUESTIONS

Proposed and answered

RELATIVE TO THE

MONETARY, CURRENCY, AND
FINANCIAL



SERIES

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THREE QUESTIONS Proposed and Answered.



SOLOMON* one of the best of Critics, and one of the wisest Masters of Distinction, informs us; that for every Thing there is a Season, and a Time for every Purpose under the Heaven: For God, who hath the Times and Seasons in his own Power, hath so wisely settled that Matter, as to make Time and Duty join Hands, and never jarr for want of Conformity, when they meet at a proper Season. The Day is calculated with the greatest Wisdom, for all the Purposes and Employments of Life. The Night is adapted with the best of Circumstances for Rest and Refreshment, after the Fatigues of the Day. Six Days are appointed to manage and transact our Civil Affairs, lest they remain in Confusion, and we be tormented with Poverty, and Distress. And the

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* Some think that the Book of Ecclesiastes is a Dialogue between an Infidel and a Lover of God, wherein Solomon personates both; and in a regular well-disposed Contrast unveils the Cheat, Imposition and Absurdity of the first; and discovers the Glory, Beauty and Excellency of the latter. The Subject in the Beginning of the third Chapter, is ascribed to the Infidel; which in some People's Esteem, may render the Citation above impertinent. But be it as it will, the Maxim is a serious, sober Truth; if we confine it to the Season appointed by God, for every honourable Transaction, and the Time allotted for every worthy Purpose.

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the Seventh Part of our Time, is sanctified and set apart for higher Employment, that we may withdraw from Noise and Hurry, and spend the Day in conversing with God.

But as the World is never without some, who vainly quarrel with the Wisdom of Heaven ; and rudely pretend to rectify the Appointments thereof : So we are not without some in our Day, who affirm that the Obligation to keep the holy Rest, is abolished under the Gospel :—Others carp at the Change from the Seventh, to the First Day of the Week :—And others pretend, that the Sanctification of that, or any other Day, hath no Relation to refraining from our constant Labour ; but only that the Heart be right with God : Now in order that doubtful Minds may be relieved, the Mistakes of the Ignorant and Unwary rectified, and the Pride of the Obstinate reproved, the following Questions are proposed, and answered.

I. Whether the Commandment of God, for the holy Observance of the Sabbath Day, be a moral Obligation, whereby all Mankind are enjoined perpetually to keep it ?

II. Whether we have sufficient Authority from the New Testament, for changing the Time, from the Seventh Day of the Week, (kept in Commemoration of our CREATION) to the First Day of the Week (kept in Commemoration of our REDEMPTION ;) or, from the Day wherein God rested from all his Works, to the Day wherein EMANUEL rested from all his Sufferings ?

III. Wherein consisteth the true keeping, or real Breach of the Sabbath ?

Quest. I. Whether the Commandment of God, for the holy Observance of the Sabbath Day, be a moral Obligation whereby all Mankind are enjoined perpetually to keep it ?

Ans. The divine Precept for keeping holy the Sabbath Day, is strictly, universally, and perpetually binding to all Mankind : But unto Christians in a more especial Manner ; and that for Reasons most conspicuous.

1. The Example of JEHOVAH himself, Gen. ii. 2, 3. *And on the Seventh Day God ended his Work, which he had made ; and he rested on the Seventh Day from all his Work*

Work which he had made;—And God blessed the Seventh Day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his Work, which God created and made. See Exod. xx. 11.

2. This Commandment pertains to the moral Law; being one of the ten Words that God spake upon Mount Sinai (which he did not any Part of the ceremonial Law) and wrote with his own Finger upon a Table of Stone never to be abolished.

3. The Observance of the Seventh Day was not taken from any particular Privilege or Deliverance granted to Israel, to make it peculiar to that Nation only; but from the Creation: And therefore must relate to all Mankind, *Exod. xx. 11.*

4. In the very Nature of Things, it is impossible the Obligation should cease, while Men live upon the Earth; for the doing of necessary Business, and the orderly worshipping of God are distinct Things, and incompatible to be performed at the same Time; therefore, either the one must cease, or each must have their own separate appointed Time, *Levit. xxii. 3. Six Days shall Work be done, but the Seventh Day is the Sabbath of Rest, an holy Convocation; ye shall do no Work; it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your Dwellings.*

5. The Sabbath is appointed to be kept, in Remembrance of the rich Blessings, and Favours bestowed upon Mankind, *Ezek. xx. 12. I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a Sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them:* Therefore none of Mankind can cease to keep the Sabbath, until all Gratitude to their Creator cease: But as CHRISTIANS are blessed with the richest of all Blessings, their Obligations

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* *This does not militate against a Believer's enjoying Communion with Jesus, while he transacts the Common Affairs of Life; but only shews the Impropriety of carrying on the orderly, external Worship of God, and civil Concerns at the same Time. As for Instance; it would be strange for me to write a Letter to my Correspondent, while I sit at the Lord's Table; or converse with my Friend, while I kneel in Prayer to my God.*

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gations to keep the HOLY REST, are stronger than any other Peoples.

From all these Things taken together, it evidently appears that the moral Sanction of the Sabbath, never was or never will be abolished, *Matt. v. 17, 18.*

Quest. II. Whether we have sufficient Authority from the New Testament, for changing the Time, from the Seventh Day of the Week, (kept in Commemoration of our CREATION,) to the First Day of the Week (kept in Commemoration of our REDEMPTION) or from the Day wherein GOD rested from all his Works, to the Day wherein EMANUEL rested from all his Sufferings?

Answer. Christians have a substantial Ground, and sufficient Authority from the New Testament, for keeping their Sabbath on the first, and not upon the last Day of the Week; which is manifestly apparent from the following Reasons.

1. The Commandment does not enjoin us to fix upon one precise numerical Day; or to keep an exact Reckoning from such a peculiar period of Time; but to work Six Days and keep the Seventh holy. Nor is it possible to know, whether the Jewish Sabbath be kept on the Seventh Day of the Week, from the Creation or not. The 16th of *Exodus*, where the first Mention of it is made, does not inform us; therefore the Commandment is truly kept, if we closely attend to the Rule, to labour Six Days, and keep the Seventh holy; according to what Day is kept in the Nation or Churches to which we belong; or where Providence hath fixed our Habitation. And it would only be a Piece of Superstition to perplex ourselves, about the uninterrupted Succession of Days, concerning which a Certainty would be impossible.

2. One Day in itself cannot be more holy than another, for Time is only a measurement of Duration, in which there cannot possibly be any intrinsic Holiness or Unholiness; only God requires that Man should be entirely devoted to Holiness every Seventh Day of his Life. Had the Holiness consisted in the Time, then *Man must have been for the Sabbath, but now the Sabbath is for Man, Mark ii. 27.* A Holy Day means no more, than

than a Day appointed for Man to be solemnly devoted to worship GOD in the BEAUTY OF HOLINESS.

3. While *Israel* dwelt together in one Land, they might keep the Sabbath on one precise Day; but since the Gospel is now to be published through the whole World, it is impracticable for all Nations to keep the Sabbath, at the same Instant of Time; (as all Persons know, who understand any thing of the different Longitude of the the Earth) seeing, that whensoever it is Sun-rising in one Country, it is Sun-setting in another.

4. With Respect to keeping the Sabbath on the first Day of the Week: If any Thing gives Sanction to one Day above another, it is the keeping of it in Commemoration of some glorious Event, which may have a proper Influence to raise our Affections, and impress our Minds with Gratitude and Devotion. Therefore of old, the Children of *Israel* kept the Sabbath, with a View to celebrate the Wisdom, Power, and Goodness of GOD, in Creation, Providence, and Promise; while they blessed the LORD for their Families, their Flocks, their Corn, their Wine, &c. gave Thanks to his Name for their marvelous Delivery out of Bondage, and to fix on their Minds a sweet Prospect of the appointed REST. But now a more glorious Event being come, THE RESURRECTION OF THE SON OF GOD. The keeping of the Sabbath in Honour of this Day, which the LORD hath made; hath a more immediate Tendency, to fill our Hearts with holy Joy, and Spiritual Devotion; while we contemplate with Pleasure, the glorious Wisdom, and gracious Goodness of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, in his matchless Love, grand Undertakings, precious Redemption, dolorous Sufferings, prevalent Mediation, great Condescension, last Coming, and everlasting REST, which all the Redeemed shall enjoy, without any Mixture of Sorrow or Complaint.

5. All the Evangelists are very particular in observing, or pointing out, that *the Resurrection of our LORD was upon the first Day of the Week*, Matt. 28. Mar. 16. Luke 24. Joh. 20. And it is very significant, that he rose the Morning after the Old Sabbath; and with his Resurrection introduced a new Week; having procured for his People Eternal Rest, where all Things are for ever

ever New ; and ushered in the exceeding Glory of his Kingdom, the transcendent Lustre whereof, makes all the Glories of Nature to subside. A Rest which cannot be polluted or shaken, a true permanent undisturbed SABBATH. Therefore, *on the first Day of the Week, JESUS gave his first Blessing to the Disciples, after his Resurrection ; and likewise did the same on the first Day of the Week next following, John xx. 19, 26. He had told them before, that he was Lord of the Sabbath, Luke vi. 5.* Therefore when they found that he chose the first Day of the Week to rest from his Sufferings*, to relieve them from their Anxieties, and to pour forth his Holy Spirit upon them†, whereby they were blessed with new Discoveries of his Everlasting Kingdom. It was to them sufficient Authority to keep the Sabbath on that Day. And accordingly they practised, for *Paul and his Company, with the Disciples at Troas, assembled on the first Day of the Week, to break Bread, Acts xx. 7. And by the Directions given to the Church at Corinth, as well as to the Churches at Galatia, 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. it plainly appears to have been the Practice of the Christian Churches, both in Europe and Asia ; and established by the great Apostle of the Gentiles, to keep the Sabbath on the first Day of the Week.*

And the very last glorious Vision, wherein JESUS CHRIST appeared to Man from Heaven, in his wonderful Revelation to his Servant JOHN, was on the first Day of the Week ; *which in Honour of the LORD of Life and Glory, was called the LORD'S-DAY, Rev. i. 10.*

Quest.

* For as long as Death kept Possession, and the Grave confined the honourable Prisoner, he could not be said to rest from his Sufferings ; therefore it is said to be on the first Day of the Week, when he vanquished Death, left the Grave, and returned victorious from the Field of Battle.

† This refers to Pentecost, or the Feast of Fifty Days ; which was on the Morrow after the Jewish Sabbath, Lev. xxiii. 15, 16. And as GOD honoured it so highly, with a powerful and plentiful Effusion of the Spirit upon the Disciples, and with a rich In-gathering of Souls, Acts 2. It is no small Proof of the Change of the Sabbath from the Seventh to the First Day of the Week.

Quest. III. Wherein consisteth the true keeping, or real Breach of the Sabbath?

Answer. To keep the Sabbath according to the divine Institution, and true Design, is, to be wholly devoted to the Lord; avoiding all secular Concerns, and Employments, whether for Profit or Gratification; that we may wait upon God, learn his Will, seek his Face, and pursue his Glory with Chearfulness and Delight, *And being disengaged in Mind, Word, and Action from all other Things, that the Concerns of his Kingdom may be the sole Objects to engross our Attention, during the whole Day,* Isa. lviii. 13. Which necessarily requires a particular Consideration, what Works, or natural Performances may be done on that Day, consistent with a conscientious keeping of the Sabbath holy: without making ourselves guilty of profaning or violating the same. And,

1. The Nature of the Thing sufficiently directs us; for it is not a Servitude or Bondage, but a Rest, Enjoyment, and Spiritual Delight, wherein God will have Mercy and not Sacrifice. Therefore, whatever is necessary for Refreshment, to preserve our Minds and Bodies in a chearful lively Position, that we may wait upon God without Distraction, Pain, Dulness, or Discomposure, and be alert and active in the proper Exercises of the Day; this is not to violate, but rightly to keep the Sabbath. And as we know in common Affairs, whatsoever Business we are engaged in, it is necessary to use all proper Means of Refreshment, Cleanliness, &c. and to avoid every Thing that gives Pain or Disturbance; all of which is consistent with Diligence, being a Furtherance, and not Hinderance to our Pursuits.— And as to ourselves, so to others; whatever relates to shewing Mercy to an Object immediately in Distress; or may tend to contribute to their comfortable Enjoyment of the Sabbath: Whether in our Families, or among our Neighbours, as we have Opportunity: *This is not to violate, but answer the End of keeping the LORD'S DAY,* Matt. xii. 1.—12. *John* vii. 23. Also, whatever is necessary to the Worship of God, for performing it in an orderly Manner to Edification; or to travel a Number of Miles, for the Enjoyment of the Word and Ordinances,

Ordinances, where they are not at hand to be enjoyed: This is not a Violation, but Sanctification of the HOLY REST. There is likewise some Works indispensably necessary to be done every Day, which can neither be prevented nor postponed, therefore lawful on the Sabbath; as attending young Children, feeding and watering Cattle, milking of Cows, guiding Ships at Sea, &c. Again, some things which are not necessary in their own Nature, yet become so to some Persons through their Circumstance in Life. As a Man who is a Servant to an unbelieving Master, may be obliged to do Things, which a conscientious Master would not require, which makes that lawful to him; which would not be so if he was in a Capacity to get his Bread another Way: Thus the Circumstances of Cases naturally direct the tender Conscience, *who is neither superstitiously in Bondage, nor carnally loose*, Gal. v. 13.

2. Every judicious Person is the best Judge of his own Necessities and Motives; whether his simple View be the Glory of God, or to answer some meaner End:—Whether he does these things which necessity requires, for Health of Body and Comfort of Mind, that God may be glorified, and the Soul edified, or for sensual Gratification:—Whether he act from real Necessity or Covetousness, taking Advantage of the Liberty that is allowed upon Necessity, to make a Trade of it for the Sake of Profit, only pleading Necessity for a Colour to hide the base Design.—Whether the Necessity a Person is under be natural and unavoidable; or occasioned by a careless Neglect on the foregoing Day. As if a Family or Person be destitute of Food, it is necessary to buy and consequently lawful to sell; but if the Person had Money the preceding Day, the Fault is his own. Thus the Sabbath may be negatively violated on the Preparation Day, as well as actually profaned on the identical Day. Perhaps Milk may be wanted, and cannot be had till the Morning, but things that may be had, and will keep, may as well be provided the Day before; in Case a Person have wherewith to make Provision. From the whole every one must be the best Judge of his own Intentions, whether they be simple or selfish.

To conclude the Matter, we are verily persuaded, that no Man who has a Regard for the Scriptures as the Word of the Living God, is a diligent Searcher in order to be acquainted therewith, and firmly believes the Obligation to keep the moral Law perpetually binding, without any Restriction or the least Variation; but must in Consequence believe it as much his Duty to keep the Sabbath holy, as to observe any other Article therein contained. But if any are to surprizingly hardened as to disregard divine Revelation, it is no Wonder to find them Libertines on the LORD'S-DAY. And if any are led astray in this Point, for want of Acquaintance with the sacred Oracles, the Ignorance is wilful and effected, and they altogether inexcusable, seeing the Law is so full and plain. Again, if any are so stupidly ignorant, and arrogantly presumptuous, as to affirm that the moral Law has no Force under the Gospel, but is entirely abolished and done away, they only discover their own Blindness, betray a loose carnal Mind, and are manifest Abusers of Gospel Liberty; for can ever Love to God and our Neighbour be abolished? And if not; then on these two hang all the Law and the Prophets. Such as having no God but JEHOVAH.—refraining from Idolatry.—Hallowing and not profaning the Name of the LORD.—Sanctifying the Sabbath.—Honouring FATHER and MOTHER.—Committing no MURDER, ADULTERY, or THEFT.—Bearing no False WITNESS against, nor coveting my NEIGHBOURS PROPERTY; together with every other Law and Precept of the like Nature. Now GOD *spake all these Words, to shew their Force and Authority, Exod. xx. 1. Wrote them with his own Finger, that they might abide for ever, Exod. xxxi. 18, and 32. Deut. ix. 10. And commanded the perpetual Observance of them, that the Obligation might never cease, Deut. x. 12, 13. Matt. xxviii. 20.* Nor do we think, that those who have a Regard for the GOSPEL, and the Authority of CHRIST; will have any Uneasiness about the Change of the Sabbath, when they consider how the LORD JESUS hath honoured the first Day of the Week, in such a Variety of Instances as is mentioned in the Answer to the Second Question. Nor can we in the least imagine, that CHRISTIANS who are blessed with all the

Privileges

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